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Implementation of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014)

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. This second report is submitted pursuant to paragraph 17 of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), in which the Security Council requested the Secretary-General to report, every 30 days, on the implementation of the resolution by all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic.

2. The report covers the period from 22 March to 21 April 2014. The information contained in the report is based on the limited data available to the United Nations actors on the ground and reports from open sources and sources of the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic.

II. Major developments

A. Political/military

3. During the reporting period, fighting between Government and opposition forces, as well as between various opposition groups, continued in many parts of the Syrian Arab Republic. Fighting was particularly intense in Aleppo, Ladhiqiyah, Dar`a, Homs and Rif Dimashq governorates. Clashes also continued in several other parts of the country, including in Hama, Idlib, Ar Raqqah and Deir ez-Zor governorates. The conduct of hostilities by all parties to the conflict, including direct and indiscriminate attacks on civilians and civilian areas, continued to cause deaths and injuries.

4. In Aleppo, fighting escalated with significant shelling and the continued use of other heavy weaponry by Government forces. The use of missiles and rocket launchers by opposition groups resulted in a high number of casualties and injuries. An average of 20 shells and missiles were reported to have fallen daily on neighbourhoods in both eastern and western Aleppo between the end of March and early April. According to Human Rights Watch, which conducted a review of satellite imagery on 22 February, 1 March and 2 April 2014, there is strong evidence to suggest the use by government forces of indiscriminate aerial bombardment and ground attacks of opposition-held neighbourhoods in Aleppo. This reportedly includes over 85 major places impacted since 22 February with damage signatures

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strongly consistent with the use of improvised barrel and conventional bombs, resulting in the destruction of a vast number of residential buildings. The damage was particularly evident in opposition-held neighbourhoods of Masaken Hanano, Al Sakhour, Terbet Lala, Helwaniye, Jabal Badro, Al Heidariyya and Owaija.

5. Since 5 April, armed groups have also launched an offensive in the Al Layramoun and Al-Zahraa neighbourhoods, in the north-western part of Aleppo city, with armed clashes resulting in the injury and displacement of scores of civilians. In addition, armed clashes between Government and opposition groups in and around Ramousa town, on the southern outskirts of Aleppo city, have rendered access to the western part of Aleppo irregular since 12 April. Aleppo city is effectively encircled by armed opposition groups. Fighting, especially near the only supply route from Homs, Damascus and the coast into the city, has raised concerns about fuel shortages and rising food prices and other commodities in both western and eastern Aleppo.

6. In Ladhiqiyah, armed opposition groups, including Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham and Ansar al-Sham, launched a major offensive on Kassab town and surrounding areas on 21 March, taking control of the adjacent border crossing with Turkey from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic. The fighting reportedly led to the forced displacement of more than 7,500 people, many of whom have sought shelter in Ladhiqiyah city. There have been reports of attacks on civilians, as well as looting of civilian homes and religious sites, including churches, although these remain unconfirmed.

7. In Dar`a governorate, conflict persisted in locations with a heavy concentration of civilians, including displaced people. Reports of a high number of aerial bombardments were reported in Dar`a city, Jasim and Ankhal (northern Dar`a); Tassil, Tafs and Mzeireb (south-west); and Tiba and Sayda (east of the al-Naseeb border crossing with Jordan). This included, for example, on 26 March damage to grain silos that stored 25 metric tons of wheat in Dar`a.

8. Government-controlled cities and towns, including Damascus, were subject to indiscriminate mortar attacks and shelling by armed opposition groups. Between 26 March and 1 April heavily populated areas of Damascus, such as Al Midan, Al Mogambo, Al Sulaymaniyah, Al Khaldiya and Nile Street, were attacked with mortars, resulting in secondary and tertiary displacement. In the first week of April alone, over 100 mortars were fired on neighbourhoods of Damascus. Opposition groups shelled residential areas in the city, including the districts of Al Malk, Bab Touma, Al Sadat, Al Kabbas and Al Zablatani.

9. Car bombings and suicide attacks, including against civilians, resulted in further civilian deaths and injuries. In particular, multiple instances of vehicle-borne improvised explosive devices were reported in the governorates of Idlib, Dar`a, Al Hasakeh, Ladhiqiyah and Homs. For example, according to open sources, on 9 April at least 25 people, including women and children, were killed and another 100 were wounded when two car bombs exploded in the Karam al-Luz district, a predominantly Alawite neighbourhood of Homs city. Two volunteers from the Syrian Arab Red Crescent were among the injured as they arrived in an ambulance to treat people hurt by the initial blast.

10. Fighting near the Khan Dannoun Palestinian refugee camp, in south Damascus, resulted in a number of deaths and injuries of Palestine refugees. Several buildings

and a mosque were also damaged. Four Palestinians, taken hostage by armed opposition groups, are still missing. After several hours of fighting the armed groups withdrew from the camp.

11. Foreign fighters continue to support all sides of the Syrian conflict, including extremist groups, armed opposition groups and the Government. The United Nations is unable to provide a verified assessment of their presence and activity on a nationwide scale. Interviewed by the Lebanese daily newspaper *As Safir* on 7 and 8 April, the Secretary-General of Hizbullah, Sayyed Hassan Nasrallah, referenced Hizbullah's "intervention" in the Syrian Arab Republic and stated that "we are present where we have to be present". With regard to extremist foreign fighters, there have been unconfirmed reports that the flow has slowed down during the past few months.

12. Thousands of people were forcibly displaced during the reporting period owing to ongoing fighting, as well as the deterioration in living conditions, particularly in the governorates of Aleppo, Ladhiqiyah, Hama, Idlib, Dar'a and Rif Dimashq. The largest numbers of people seem to have been displaced from opposition-held areas, and, in many cases, into areas under Government control, which people deem to be safer. For example, around 40,000 people are estimated to have fled to Hama city owing to fighting around Morek in Hama governorate, while around 117,500 people sought shelter in Idlib city and surrounding areas. In Rif Dimashq, escalation of fighting in Qudsiya led to the temporary displacement of an estimated 170,000 people residing in surrounding areas, mostly towards Damascus city.

B. Human rights

13. The treatment of civilians under the control of parties to the conflict also continued to raise serious concerns during the reporting period. This includes reports of killings; enforced disappearances; torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment; arbitrary arrest and detention; kidnappings; and increasing sexual violence, by many parties to the conflict. In addition, reports have been received of incidents of child recruitment and child labour. On 28 March, the Human Rights Council adopted a resolution extending the mandate of the independent international commission of inquiry on the Syrian Arab Republic for one year. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights called on the Security Council, on 8 April, to refer the situation in the Syrian Arab Republic to the International Criminal Court.

14. On 7 April, an elderly priest, Father Frans van der Lugt, was killed in the Old City of Homs by unidentified armed gunmen. On 14 April, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights released a paper with consistent reports of torture and other cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment by Government forces. The paper also documented torture and ill-treatment committed by the Islamic State in Iraq and Al-Sham (ISIS), Jabhat al-Nusra, Ahrar al-Sham, Liwa al-Tawhed and Liwa Asifat al-Shamal. In addition, the paper documented the poor conditions in which those detained by Government forces and some armed opposition groups are being held. This could constitute or lead to torture or cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment.

15. On 29 March, ISIS reportedly executed and mutilated the bodies of members of the Free Syrian Army held hostage in Margila, Deir ez-Zor. The Office of the

United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) received the names of 24 victims of the incident. During the reporting period, reports verified by OHCHR also indicate that activists documenting human rights violations in Ar Raqqah were forced to flee the city out of fear of being kidnapped or detained owing to their work.

16. Concerns also remain about the situation of civilians in other areas under opposition control, in particular given the previous track-record of some of the opposition groups involved. After the opposition gained control of Kassab, an initial report indicated that 40 people, mostly elderly Armenians, were trapped in Kassab town and surrounding villages. Eight Armenians are reported missing, and there is no information about the whereabouts of Alawites who used to live in Kassab. Both Jabhat al-Nusra and Ahrar al-Sham took part in a previous offensive on Alawite villages in rural Ladhiqiyah in August 2013, which resulted in the killing of at least 190 people and the kidnapping of another 200, most of them women and children. During the reporting period, Ahrar al-Sham stated that it continued to hold over 90 hostages from that incident. In a statement issued on 29 March, Jabhat al-Nusra confirmed that it had killed a number of people, although it is not clear whether they included civilians.

17. The situation of detainees in the Government-run Aleppo Central Prison, which has been surrounded by several armed groups since mid-2013, continues to be dire, despite intermittent delivery of assistance by the Syrian Arab Red Crescent. There have been reports of several cases of death as a result of starvation or denial of medical treatment, including the death of one prisoner recorded by OHCHR during the reporting period. Around 2,500 individuals, including women and children, are estimated to be held at the prison, including hundreds of prisoners who have served their sentence or have been pardoned but have not yet been released. Former detainees in many other prisons gave accounts of daily deaths in detention owing to lack of medical treatment.

C. Humanitarian access

18. Approximately 9.3 million people, more than 6.5 million of them internally displaced, continue to be in need of urgent humanitarian assistance within the Syrian Arab Republic. It is estimated that 3.5 million people reside in areas that are difficult or impossible for humanitarian actors to reach owing to a number of factors, some of which are set out below. This includes at least 242,000 people who live in areas that are besieged by either Government or opposition forces.

19. The operational environment in the Syrian Arab Republic remains extremely challenging owing to continued violence and insecurity, including direct and indiscriminate attacks on civilian areas, as well shifting conflict lines and the proliferation and fragmentation of armed opposition groups. These factors have continued to hamper humanitarian access.

20. During the reporting period, United Nations humanitarian agencies and partners delivered increasing amounts of assistance to Syrian men, women and children. This included, for example, food assistance dispatched by the World Food Programme (WFP) for 4.1 million people, an 11 per cent increase compared with the 3.7 million people reached in February. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and partners provided relief items to 155,540 people between

25 March and 1 April reaching hard-to-reach locations such as Karak and Moarabeh in Dar`a for the first time. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and partners provided water treatments to produce safe water for more than 1.7 million people, including 460,000 litres of sodium chloride that was distributed in 11 governorates; 40 per cent went to hard-to-reach areas, through the provision of water tanks and generators. In addition, 54,770 children received school supplies and space for their education in nine hard-to-reach areas. Since March, WHO and partners have also provided medicines and medical equipment, including surgical supplies to partners, for up to 1.5 million people, including for 445,710 people in hard-to-reach and contested areas. This included, for example, 113,000 people in Abu Kamal in Deir ez-Zor, which was reached for the first time, and 408,470 people in opposition-controlled areas in Deir ez-Zor, Idlib and Ar Raqqah governorates.

21. Despite these modest gains, humanitarian agencies are faced with increasing challenges to deliver regular and timely needs-based humanitarian assistance to affected people, particularly those in hard-to-reach locations and areas under siege. During the reporting period, tne assistance provided, whether through regular agency programming or through inter-agency convoys, only reached 34 out of the 262 locations identified as being hard to reach or besieged, a mere 13 per cent of locations. That included food assistance for 339,642 people (9.7 per cent of the 3.5 million people) and essential relief items for 60,482 people (1.7 per cent of the 3.5 million people). That included areas that the United Nations has not been able to reach in a number of months, including eastern Aleppo city, Douma in Rif Dimashq, Karak and Moarabeh in Dar`a governorate, rural areas in Ar Raqqah, Deir ez-Zor city and camps for internally displaced persons in northern Idlib, which had not been reached since the start of the crisis. WFP reported an increase in the number of people supported with food in hard-to-reach areas with an estimated 297,750 people reached, up from 115,500 during the previous period. Of the 297,750 people reached, 185,250 people were reached through WFP regular aid programmes and 112,500 people were reached through inter-agency convoys. Assistance to Al Hasakeh also increased during the reporting period, largely as a result of the movement of aid across the Nusaybin border with Turkey.

22. The vast majority of hard-to-reach locations, however, remain extremely difficult for the United Nations and its partners to reach. This lack of access is particularly acute in five governorates that have been consistently difficult to reach: Ar Raqqah, Deir ez-Zor, Dar`a, Rif Dimashq and Aleppo. The governorates of Ar Raqqah and Deir ez-Zor as a whole have received extremely limited humanitarian assistance over the past six months, owing to insecurity and a proliferation of armed groups, including in particular ISIS, as access is blocked to the north-eastern part of the country. In Ar Raqqah and Deir ez-Zor governorates, 3 of 22 hard-to-reach locations were reached during the reporting period. In Dar`a only 2 of 70 hard-to-reach locations were reached with assistance for 10,000 people. The main obstacles included ongoing active conflict and a lack of cooperation from the local governor, which prevented United Nations cross-line aid deliveries. In Rif Dimashq, where around 178,000 people continue to be besieged by Government forces, only 3 of the 35 hard-to-reach locations were accessed. Active conflict and Government restrictions, in particular to besieged areas, continued to prevent access to people in need.

23. Despite the delivery of assistance by UNHCR to eastern Aleppo on 8 April, the mission was complicated and dangerous. A four-hour ceasefire was negotiated by

UNHCR and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent to deliver relief items to 2,500 people. Owing to the presence of landmines in the no-man's land between front lines, relief items were moved on 54 small pullcarts, with the help of 75 workers and UNHCR/Syrian Arab Red Crescent staff. Travelling a distance of 1.5 kilometres, the workers made five consecutive round trips to transport the relief items. All of eastern and northern Aleppo, under the control of multiple opposition groups, remains hard to reach for the United Nations.

Besieged areas

24. The situation of approximately 242,000[1] people in besieged areas remains of grave concern. It is estimated that approximately 197,000 people live in areas that are besieged by Government forces in the Old City of Homs, Moadamiyet al-Sham, eastern Ghouta, Darayya and Yarmouk, while approximately 45,000 people live in areas besieged by opposition forces in Nubul and Zahra.

25. During the reporting period, 23,700 people, or almost 10 per cent of people living under siege in two of these besieged areas, were reached with limited assistance: Douma, in eastern Ghouta, and Yarmouk, in Damascus.

26. **Eastern Ghouta**. On 29 March, an inter-agency convoy led by the Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator, delivered food for 5,000 people and relief items for 15,000 people. An additional convoy to Douma, although approved, was put on hold by the United Nations, as the Government refused to allow medicines to be included in the convoy. A new request for a convoy to Douma from 22 to 25 April was submitted on 16 April, emphasizing the need to deliver medicines and other medical supplies. A response is still pending. The majority of towns in eastern Ghouta have been besieged since 2012.

27. **Moadamiyet al-Sham**. Previous reports of thousands of people returning to Moadamiyet al-Sham have been cross-checked by the United Nations, and it is now estimated that approximately 15,000 people have returned to the town, following the truce/ceasefire agreement and subsequent reduction in active conflict. This increased the number of people in besieged Moadamiyet al-Sham from 5,000 to 20,000 people. There continue to be reports of limited movements of people in and out of the area, who have been permitted to bring in very small amounts of food. Medicines and reconstruction/shelter materials continue to be prohibited. In addition, the United Nations and the Syrian Arab Red Crescent are still unable to enter the area to deliver humanitarian assistance.

28. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs approved an inter-agency convoy to Moadamiyet al-Sham that was scheduled for departure on 1 April. However, the convoy did not depart, as the Government communicated to the Humanitarian Coordinator that conditions for the receipt of the assistance on the ground had not been met, so the convoy could not proceed. In ongoing efforts to facilitate the necessary conditions for humanitarian access, on 6 April, the United Nations met

[1] There have been reports that around 15,000 people have returned to Moadamiyet al-Sham, bringing the total number of besieged in Moadamiyet to 20,000. The number of people besieged in Yarmouk is now estimated at 18,000. Around 150,000 are besieged in eastern Ghouta (as opposed to 160,000 after a recent United Nations assessment), while 8,000 continue to be besieged in Darayya, 45,000 in Nubul and Zahra by opposition armed groups and 1,000 in the Old City of Homs. This brings the number of people besieged to 242,000 (197,000 by Government forces and 45,000 by opposition forces).

with representatives from the National Reconciliation Committee and the opposition, reaching an agreement on the mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the town. On the basis of this agreement, a further request was submitted by the Humanitarian Coordinator to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 9 April for an accompanied inter-agency convoy between 14 and 17 April with food and non-food items for up to 5,000 people and medicines for up to 37,000 people. The convoy request remains pending with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. Moadamiyet al-Sham has been besieged since late 2012.

29. **Yarmouk**. Continued fighting in and around Yarmouk disrupted efforts to access the area. During the reporting period, food parcels were distributed to some 2,173 families (approximately 8,692 people), sufficient to meet only 15 per cent of the minimum food needs of the resident population. The distribution activities of the United Nations Relief and Works Agency for Palestine Refugees in the Near East (UNRWA) were either authorized or enabled on only seven days during the reporting period, with the last food distribution taking place on 8 April. Approximately 18,000 civilians, the majority of whom are Palestine refugees, remain trapped in the area, facing acute risk of hunger and malnutrition, exposure to communicable diseases, poor sanitation and lack of medical care. Given that an UNRWA food parcel lasts for a maximum of 10 days, UNRWA states that there will be no food in Yarmouk from 20 April. Yarmouk has been besieged since June 2013.

30. **Darayya**. Approximately 8,000 people remain besieged in Darayya, Rif Dimashq, with no access to assistance or evacuations having occurred during the reporting period. Darayya has been besieged since November 2012.

31. **Old City of Homs**. It is estimated that 1,000 people remain in the Old City of Homs. Heavy clashes between Government, pro-Government and opposition forces inside the Old City erupted on 15 April. This fighting followed a breakdown of intensive negotiations between the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, the local reconciliation committee and other representatives inside the Old City aimed at agreeing on a truce. Assistance was last provided to the Old City between 7 and 12 February 2014 through a joint United Nations/Syrian Arab Red Crescent mission. The Old City of Homs has been besieged since June 2012.

32. During the mission carried out from 7 to 12 February, 1,400 people were evacuated, including 470 men and boys between the ages of 15 and 55 years, who were taken to the Government's Al-Andalus facility for Government screening. Of those men and boys, 57 remain at the facility awaiting clearance. A further 25 who were cleared remain in the facility for various reasons, including lack of civil documents, loss of homes and lack of relatives nearby. Among those who were cleared, 19 individuals have been reported arrested or missing after having left the facility. Further follow-up by UNHCR revealed that of the 19, 6 were released, 2 are missing, and 1 is still in detention. UNHCR was unable to verify the current status of the remaining 10 individuals. On 7 April, during a meeting between the Humanitarian Coordinator and the Governor of Homs, the Governor reported that a further 660 males between the ages of 15 and 55 had left the Old City since the end of the United Nations-facilitated evacuations in February, and that a total of 500 men and boys remain at the facility. The Humanitarian Coordinator has expressed to the Governor the serious concerns of the United Nations regarding the status of the men and boys at the Al-Andalus facility. It was agreed with the

Governor that the United Nations would provide humanitarian supplies for those at the Al-Andalus facility through a local partner.

33. **Nubul and Zahra**. On 4 April, the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic approved convoys to the besieged towns of Nubul and Zahra, as well as four nearby communities (Kafr Hamra, Hreitan, Heyan and Meyer). The United Nations has been engaged in intense negotiations with opposition groups to facilitate access to the towns and re-establish access to rural Aleppo, over the past two weeks. The opposition groups in question initially put forth stringent conditions, including that (i) Syrian forces immediately cease shelling in Aleppo; (ii) the situation in the Aleppo Central Prison be resolved; (iii) humanitarian assistance be delivered to Homs and Rif Dimashq; (iv) all women and children be released from detention; and (v) Government forces withdraw from Nubul and Zahra. While those conditions have been relaxed, negotiations continue. Nubul and Zahra have been besieged since April 2013.

Cross-border assistance

34. Distribution of the aid transported (from 20-25 March) from Turkey to the Syrian Arab Republic through the Nusaybin/Qamishli border crossing is ongoing in opposition, Government and Kurdish-controlled areas through partners in Qamishli city, Tal Tamir, Al Shaddadeh, Al Hawl, Jwadiyeh, Derbassiyeh, Tal Brak, Tal Hamis and Amuda in rural Al Hasakeh governorate, Al Hasakeh city, Al Malkieh district and Ras al-Ain district in the northern part of Al Hasakeh. On 8 April, WFP received written authorization from the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic for an additional convoy to move through the Nusaybin crossing from Turkey. These rations were initially intended for importation to the Syrian Arab Republic through the Al Yaroubiyah crossing from Iraq, for which consent was withdrawn by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic in January. WFP has 34 trucks of food rations available to cross through the Nusaybin crossing. The United Nations is expecting a positive response from the Turkish authorities following a request made on 10 April.

35. Requests made by the United Nations to the Syrian authorities to urgently authorize the use of additional border crossings still remain pending. The Government of the Syrian Arab Republic has consistently stated that it will only allow the use of border crossing points that are controlled by it. The other crossing points for which requests have been made are Bab al-Salam and Bab al-Hawa on the border with Turkey, both of which are controlled by the Islamic Front; the Al Yaroubiyah crossing point with Iraq, controlled by the Democratic Union Party (PYD) and the Tal Shihab crossing point with Jordan controlled by the Free Syrian Army. A request to directly restock warehouses on route from the Al Naseeb crossing point, controlled by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic at the border with Jordan in Dar`a or Suwayda, was previously authorized.

Free passage of medical supplies, personnel and equipment

36. The delivery of medical supplies continued to be negotiated on a case-by-case basis. The inclusion of surgical supplies or any item that may be used for surgical interventions (including bandages, gloves, injectable medicines, antiseptics, anaesthetic medicines) continue to be restricted by the Government, for delivery in opposition-held areas. Only medicines for non-communicable diseases, painkillers

and antibiotics are allowed into opposition-held areas. Prior to distribution, supplies are checked multiple times by security forces, and in some cases the amount of medicines in convoys is decreased.

37. During the reporting period, medical supplies that would have assisted 216,015 people in hard-to-reach and besieged areas were either removed from convoys, or the convoys were not allowed to proceed. These included medical supplies for 195,000 people in the besieged areas of Moadamiyet al-Sham and Douma and 21,350 people in locations in Homs and Aleppo. However, convoys to hard-to-reach areas in Idlib, delivered all medicines and medical supplies, including some surgical equipment, sufficient to meet the basic needs of at least 65,000 people in Saraqab and Sarmada. In other parts of the country, many more people were denied medicines, particularly if the requests included surgical equipment, blood transfusion equipment or perfusions. In Yarmouk, the Syrian authorities continued to refuse to authorize UNRWA to distribute medical supplies, with the exception of the 15,000 polio vaccines distributed since December and a small quantity of mineral supplements, vitamin supplements and rehydration salts.

38. Negotiations are ongoing to allow medicines and medical supplies into opposition areas without any exceptions. On 10 April, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs communicated that all syringes or devices required for vaccination are now authorized to all areas. Mechanisms are also being explored with the Government to enable patients in besieged areas to have access to surgical treatment and hospital care.

39. Two new confirmed polio cases were reported in the Syrian Arab Republic in April in Aleppo and in Hama governorates. The March round of the polio vaccination campaign reached almost 3 million children. Post-campaign monitoring indicates that vaccination coverage was greater than 85 per cent in all but two governorates, Damascus (79%) and Rif Dimashq (84%).

40. Facilitation letters from the Ministry of Health and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs were received for all areas across the country for the fifth polio vaccination campaign. However, insecurity continued to hinder the immunization of children in numerous locations, including in rural areas of Hama, Dar'a, Deir ez-Zor, Aleppo, Homs, Al Hasakeh, Ar Raqqah, Rif Dimashq, Quneitra, Ladhiqiyah and besieged areas.

41. There was no progress on the demilitarization of hospitals, and no instances of such demilitarization occurred during the reporting period.

Administrative procedures

42. On 31 March, the Government communicated, in writing, that a follow-up note verbale would be sent to the Humanitarian Coordinator with specific instructions for a new procedure for the clearance of unaccompanied convoys. That procedure would allow trucks to be checked and "sealed" at warehouses to facilitate passage at checkpoints. The written communication remains pending, but instructions were sent to military checkpoints that they should comply with the new procedure.

43. A total of 18 international non-governmental organizations are authorized to work in the Syrian Arab Republic. On 8 April, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs sent a directive to an international non-governmental organization (NGO) in the Syrian Arab Republic, through the Syrian Arab Red Crescent, to either terminate cross-

border operations across the Turkish border or end its cooperation with Damascus within two weeks of the date of the directive. The international NGO has requested an extension to stay until the end of the month of April, while also seeking permission for a high-level delegation to visit the country and discuss the issue with the Government. During the reporting period, five new national NGOs were authorized to work with the United Nations.

44. International NGOs continue to be prevented from partnering with national NGOs, and they face significant restrictions for staff to travel to field locations. Many non-governmental organizations are also prevented from establishing sub-offices in field locations, or from expanding operations from sub-offices. A proposed memorandum of understanding with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent that would reduce many of the restrictive clauses was submitted to the Government on 26 February by the Government of Switzerland. The agreement of the Government to that memorandum remains pending.

45. The revised visa policy established by the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic on 4 March continued to be implemented. From 22 March to 21 April, the United Nations submitted 31 new visa requests or renewals. Of those, 16 were approved within the agreed timeframe of 15 working days; 15 remain pending, including 2 for the Department of Safety and Security (DSS), as 6 others pending from last year were cancelled by DSS. In addition, 13 new visa or renewal requests that were pending prior to the reporting period were approved. Four new international non-governmental organization visas were also approved, leaving a total of 16 requests pending.

Safety and security of staff and premises

46. On 19 April, the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Hama reported an explosion at a checkpoint on Salamiyeh road while four privately-contracted trucks carrying WFP supplies from Safita warehouse in Tartus for delivery to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Hama were waiting to pass; the trucks were severely damaged and two drivers were killed. On 10 April, two UNRWA staff, a school attendant and a teacher, sustained minor injuries, owing to the impact of a mortar on a Government school in Jaramana (Rif Dimashq) that is also used by UNRWA. Two Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteers were injured in a car bomb attack in Homs city on 9 April.

47. Twenty-five United Nations national staff members continue to be detained (21 from UNRWA, 2 from the International Organization for Migration (IOM) and 2 from the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)). Three UNRWA national staff members are missing.

III. Observations

48. While the crisis in the Syrian Arab Republic can be resolved only through a political solution, I regret to inform the Council that we have drifted even further from that goal. After two rounds of intra-Syrian negotiations in January and February, the Geneva II talks on implementation of the Geneva Communiqué have stalled. While current conditions may not be conducive for a quick resumption of peace talks, international and regional actors and the Syrian parties themselves must put aside their differences and refocus on promoting a political solution to the crisis.

49. With the ever-increasing violence and extremism, I repeat my strong calls on all in the region and beyond to stop the flow of arms and fighters to all parties in the Syrian Arab Republic. The international community must do all it can to prevent extremist groups from acquiring financial resources, weapons, food and other supplies. All regional actors must also exercise restraint and avoid provocation that would lead to further escalation of the conflict.

50. I am greatly concerned that the opening of a new front in northern Ladhiqiyah increases the risk of sectarian violence, particularly with the involvement of Jabhat al-Nusra — an Al-Qaida affiliate listed by the Security Council Sanctions Committee pursuant to resolutions 1267 (1999) and 1989 (2011) concerning Al-Qaida and associated individuals and entities — in the takeover of Kassab village along the Turkey-Syria border. I note that some of the groups involved in the Kassab offensive have espoused dangerous sectarian rhetoric and were also part of an operation in Ladhiqiyah governorate in August 2013, which led to hundreds of deaths and civilian kidnappings.

51. I remain deeply concerned by the continued indiscriminate attacks on populated areas and civilians, including with barrel bombs that have destroyed entire neighbourhoods. I want to remind all parties that, under international humanitarian law, firing at or bombarding civilians and targeting civilian infrastructure are prohibited. Such attacks, even if in reprisal, are prohibited by international humanitarian law and continue to challenge the very essence of our shared humanity.

52. Two months since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), none of the parties to the conflict have adhered to the demands of the Council. Civilians are not being protected. The security situation is deteriorating and humanitarian access to those most in need is not improving. It remains an extremely challenging environment in which to work. Thousands of people are not getting the medical care that they need, including life-saving medicines. Medical supplies, including life-saving medicines and vaccines, and equipment for the wounded and the sick are commodities privileged throughout the Geneva Conventions. Denying these is arbitrary and unjustified, and is a clear violation of international humanitarian law. Yet, medicines are routinely denied to those who need them, including tens of thousands of women, children and elderly. The Security Council must take action to deal with these flagrant violations of the basic principles of international law.

53. I must again urge the parties, and in particular the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic, to honour their obligations under international humanitarian law and act now. Security Council resolution 2139 (2014) leaves no room for interpretation or further negotiation of access. The parties must comply and allow and facilitate the delivery of essential relief items to civilians in need, in particular in those areas most difficult to reach, listed in resolution 2139 (2014). Almost 3.5 million civilians remain largely without access to essential goods and services. Failure to comply constitutes arbitrary denial of access. The Council also called upon all parties to lift the sieges of populated areas. This call has not been heard, and I consider it shameful that nearly a quarter of a million people are being deliberately forced to live under such conditions.

54. Since my previous report on the implementation of resolution 2139 (2014), I call yet again upon all parties to the conflict to work with the United Nations to

establish durable and lasting arrangements at key border and combat line crossings to facilitate access. I also call again on the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic to streamline convoy procedures and grant blanket approvals to reach all those who are desperately in need, and to facilitate the passage of medicines, including medical supplies. The time for extended access negotiations and waiting for permits and clearances should be over. People are dying needlessly every day. The United Nations is ready to take any steps possible to facilitate the impartial delivery of urgently needed humanitarian relief to those most deprived in line with international humanitarian law and the humanitarian imperative to care for the wounded and sick.

Annex

1. Protection[a]

Examples of attacks on civilian facilities (schools, hospitals, camps, places of worship)

As at 9 April 2014, open sources report a cumulative number of at least 5,840 buildings destroyed across the country, including schools, hospitals, mosques and churches. For example:

- 24 March: A mortar landed on the faculty of mechanical engineering in Ladhiqiyah, causing damages.
- 25 March: Grain silos (containing 25 metric tons of wheat flour stored) in Dar`a al-Balad were partially damaged due to aerial bombardment.
- 26 March: An explosion occurred at Damascus University, Faculty of Medicine, in the Mazzeh neighborhood of Damascus city.
- 26 March: Islamist fighters from an al-Qaida splinter group bombed a large Shiite Muslim shrine in the eastern Syrian city of Ar Raqqah.
- 28 March: An attack on the high voltage tower linking the Al-Zurbeh plant and the main electricity generating station in Aleppo resulted in power cuts.
- 1 April: A mortar landed in Jawdat al-Hashimi School in Damascus city.
- 3 April: A mortar attack caused material damage to a secondary school in Damascus.
- 3 April: A mortar landed at the police hospital in Damascus, resulting in material damage.
- 3 April: An improvised explosive device detonated near the cultural centre in Al Hasakeh, causing material damage.
- UNICEF Syria issued a statement on 4 April on the reported killing of 11 children in two separate attacks in Rif Dimashq and the Qalamoun Mountains.
- 10 April: Two UNRWA staff — a school attendant and a teacher — sustained minor injuries owing to the impact of a mortar on a Government school in Jaramana (Rif Dimashq) also used by UNRWA.
- 16 April: An attack was carried out on a school in Damascus during school hours (UNICEF statement).

Large-scale impact of conflict on public services

- 4,072 schools closed, damaged or used as shelter as a consequence of conflict.

[a] The United Nations has a distinct and regular mechanism for reporting on the six grave violations against children in armed conflict that has set verification standards and periodicity of reporting to identify trends.

- Out of 91 public hospitals, approximately 5 per cent (5) hospitals are fully damaged, and 23 per cent (21) are partially damaged.[b] 13 per cent of public hospitals are reported to be non-functioning. A total of 31 functioning hospitals across reported governorates are operating without emergency physicians, and management of severe acute malnutrition with complications is available in only 30 per cent of the facilities.[b]
- An estimated 20 hospitals remain occupied.
- 62 per cent of the public ambulance fleet is out of service (407 vehicles out of 658), with over half having been stolen, burned or badly damaged.
- Pharmaceutical plants: Local production of medicines reduced by 70 per cent.

2. Safe and unhindered humanitarian access to people in need

Hard-to-reach areas

- 3.5 million people in need in hard-to-reach areas
- During the reporting period, WFP reached 297,750 people in hard-to-reach areas, with 62 per cent of them in areas not controlled by the Government. This compares to 115,500 people reached in such areas during the previous reporting period. Since the adoption of Security Council resolution 2139 (2014), WFP has reached a total of 413,250 people in hard-to-reach areas.
- Food was provided to 339,642 beneficiaries (297,750 by WFP and 41,892 by UNRWA); a total of 60,482 out of 3.5 million people (1.7 per cent) in hard-to-reach areas received non-food items (59,950 by UNHCR and 532 by IOM).
- A total of 1,730,932 out of 3.5 million people (40 per cent) in hard-to-reach areas received safe water from UNICEF through generators and water tanks.

Besieged areas

- 242,000 people remain besieged.
- Of over 18,000 people trapped in Yarmouk, some 8,692 people received food parcels containing items sufficient to feed a family of four for approximately 10 days.
- In Douma, 15,000 people were reached with non-food items and 5,000 with food.

Cross-border assistance

From Turkey

- The United Nations received approval from Syrian and Turkish authorities in March to transport relief items from Turkey to the Syrian Arab Republic through the Nuseybin/Qamishli border crossing. From 21 to 26 March a United Nations inter-agency convoy transported relief food assistance for 50,000 people, medical supplies for 60,000, and non-food items for between

[b] "Health Resources Availability Mapping System (HeRAMS)" report for the fourth quarter of 2013.

60,000 and 160,000 people. The United Nations has requested the use of two additional border crossings; that is, Bab el-Salam and Bab al-Hawa, which are controlled by the Government of Turkey and different factions of the Islamic Front. Three crossings remain controlled by ISIS.

- Other: It is estimated that other actors have provided around $23 million worth of humanitarian assistance each month in 2014 through other channels (not counting commercial channels).

From Jordan

- The United Nations continued to transport relief items from Jordan to the Syrian Arab Republic through the Al Naseeb border crossing, although insecurity continues to prevent direct cross-line deliveries of relief from Suwayda to Dar'a governorate. This has included, for example, 158 truckloads of non-food items by UNHCR. The United Nations has requested the use of two additional border crossings with Jordan.

- Other: It is estimated that other actors have provided on average $2 million worth of assistance each month in 2014 through other channels.

From Lebanon

- The United Nations continued to transport relief items from Lebanon to the Syrian Arab Republic, mainly through the Masna and Al Arida border crossings. In 2014, that has included at least 33,500 metric tons of food provided by WFP.

- Other: Other actors transport relatively small amounts of assistance through other channels.

From Iraq

- The United Nations has conducted a series of airlifts from Iraq and other locations, including Dubai, to Qamishli in 2014. The United Nations has requested the opening of the Al Yarobiyeh border crossing, but initial approval provided on 22 November was retracted when the crossing fell under the control of PYD. The security situation in the area also remains an obstacle.

Safety of humanitarian workers

- 19 April: The Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Hama reported an explosion at a checkpoint on Salamiyeh road, while four privately contracted trucks carrying WFP supplies from Safita warehouse in Tartus for delivery to the Syrian Arab Red Crescent in Hama were waiting to pass; the trucks were severely damaged and two drivers were killed.

- 10 April: Two UNRWA staff, a school attendant and a teacher, sustained minor injuries owing to the impact of a mortar on a Government school in Jaramana (Rif Dimashq) also used by UNRWA.

- Two Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteers were injured in a car bomb attack in Homs city on 9 April.

- 25 United Nations national staff members continue to be detained (21 from UNRWA, 2 from IOM and 2 from UNDP). According to DSS, three UNRWA national staff members are missing.
- Syrian humanitarian workers face a number of risks, including summary executions, kidnappings, arrest, violence and harassment.

3. Safe passage of medical personnel and supplies

Attacks on medical facilities during the reporting period

- On 3 April a mortar was fired at the police hospital in Damascus, causing material damage.

Attacks on medical personnel

- On 9 April two Syrian Arab Red Crescent volunteers were injured in a car bomb attack in Homs city.

Removal of medicines and medical supplies from convoys

Approximately 216,015 people were denied medical assistance as a result of medicines and supplies being blocked or removed from inter-agency convoys in the reporting period:

- **Douma, 28 March**: Despite the commitment of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that medicines would be included in this convoy, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, in negotiations with the Red Crescent and OCHA, refused to include medicines or medical supplies in the convoy, while 15 trucks of food and non-food items entered Douma that day.
- **Douma, 29 March**: A convoy was cancelled by the United Nations as no approvals were received by the Ministry of Health or the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. WHO was informed by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs that a list of limited medicines and medical supplies approved for United Nations convoys to opposition-controlled or besieged areas would be developed by the Ministry of Health. To date, these supplies are still awaiting government approval for distribution in Douma.
- **Al Ghanto and Tir Malla, 7 April**: All injectable medicines in the convoy were denied access by a security official, although WHO had approval from the Governor and other security departments.

Polio vaccination campaign

- Post-polio campaign monitoring indicates an overall 90 per cent coverage rate in March.
- Vaccination coverage was greater than 85 per cent in all but two governorates, Damascus (79 per cent) and Rif Dimashq (84 per cent), as a result of besieged and hard-to-reach areas in these governorates. Areas with the largest numbers of inaccessible children for the March round were South Damascus, Rif Dimashq, Al Hasakeh, Aleppo, Ar Raqqah and rural Hama.

- Despite that, it has been estimated that the number of children in inaccessible areas has been declining. During the March round, 75,315 children were vaccinated in areas previously classified as inaccessible. Reports from health partners indicate that more than 435,000 children were estimated to be in inaccessible areas during the January vaccination round, compared to just over 104,000 during the March round (mainly in the east and west Ghouta areas of Rif Dimashq, along with parts of the Douma district, and in some villages in the Zabadani district).
- Only 55,000 doses of polio vaccine have reached Douma, covering 30 per cent of the target population for only one month, rather than the multiple doses required to control the outbreak.
- In Yarmouk, UNRWA has dispatched 15,000 polio vaccines since December 2013.
- Obtaining security clearance from the national security forces for Syrian Arab Red Crescent vaccinators continues to be an issue, despite follow-up with high-level authorities and advocacy by WHO and UNICEF. Security bottlenecks for Syrian Arab Red Crescent mobile teams are still prevailing.

4. Administrative hurdles

Clearance procedures for convoys

- On 27 March, the Government communicated a new procedure for unaccompanied truck clearance, whereby trucks will be checked and "sealed" at warehouses, and not searched at checkpoints. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs confirmed that instructions regarding the new procedure and expectations for compliance have been communicated to military checkpoints.

Approval of requests in hard-to-reach areas

Hard to reach

- Four convoy requests to hard-to-reach areas were made: Tir Mallah and Al Ghanto (Homs); and Sarmada and Saraqeb (Idlib) in the reporting period. All were approved. The Al Ghanto convoy was put on hold by the Governor (25 March) in view of security; however, a convoy to both Tir Mallah and Al Ghanto ultimately proceeded on 8 April.

Besieged

- Five inter-agency convoy requests were made for three besieged communities of Douma, Moadamiyet al-Sham, and Nubul and Zahra. Two were not answered; and three were approved, although in one instance, despite approval, the convoy could not proceed.
  - Madamyiet: Two requests were submitted: one convoy request was approved. The convoy was scheduled for departure on 1 April, but was prevented from departing, as the Government communicated to the Humanitarian Coordinator/Resident Coordinator that conditions on the ground had not been met for the convoy to proceed. In ongoing efforts to facilitate the necessary conditions for humanitarian access, on 6 April,

the United Nations met with representatives from the National Reconciliation Committee and the opposition, reaching an agreement on the mechanism for the delivery of humanitarian aid to the town. On the basis of this agreement, a request was submitted by the Humanitarian Coordinator/
Resident Coordinator to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs on 9 April for an inter-agency convoy between 14 and 17 April with food and non-food items for up to 5,000 people and medicines for up to 37,000 people. The convoy request remains pending with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

- Douma: One request was made and was approved on 29 March; multisectoral assistance (non-food items for 15,000 people and food for 5,000 people) was provided to 15,000 people. A third convoy to Douma, although approved, was put on hold by the United Nations until the Government agrees to the inclusion of medicines.
- Nubul and Zahra: Two convoy requests were made. One was approved on 4 April, but negotiations with armed groups are ongoing. The second request for a convoy between 7 and 12 April remained unanswered, pending negotiations with armed opposition groups.
- Out of over 18,000 people, civilians trapped in Yarmouk, some 8,692 people received food parcels containing items sufficient to feed a family of four for approximately 10 days. Yarmouk was accessed only seven times during the reporting period.

Empowered interlocutors

- Government of the Syrian Arab Republic: The working group established by the Government following the adoption of resolution 2139 (2014) does not yet include a security focal point. Regular meetings are taking place between the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Humanitarian Coordinator at the appropriate decision-making level.
- The fragmented nature of the opposition makes it difficult to have a clear identified interlocutor for armed opposition groups. Interlocutors will vary according to localities where access is being negotiated.

Visas

- From 22 March to 21 April, 31 new visa requests or renewals for the United Nations were submitted; 16 were approved; 15 remain pending, including 2 from DSS. Additionally, 13 new visa or renewal requests that had been pending prior to the reporting period were approved.
- From 22 March to 10 April, five new international non-governmental organization visa requests were submitted; of those, four visas were granted for Action Centre la Faim, the Danish Refugee Council and Gruppo di Volontariato Civile; three visa requests for the Danish Refugee Council regional office mission were cancelled, as the Syrian Arab Red Crescent provided unofficial feedback that they were unlikely to be approved. Therefore, by 21 April, international non-governmental organizations have a total of 16 pending visa requests.

Humanitarian hubs

- There was no new request made for hubs in the reporting period.
- Hubs in both Aleppo and Qamishli are being set up and operationalized.

Customs clearance

- The Government has authorized import and licence for UNHCR telecoms equipment. On 2 April a request for the relocation of a very small aperture terminal (VSAT) licence from Aleppo to Qamishli was granted by the Government.

International non-governmental organization partners

- No new international non-governmental organization requested to work in the Syrian Arab Republic during the reporting period. The number of international non-governmental organizations approved to work in the Syrian Arab Republic remains 18.
- International non-governmental organizations are still not authorized to work directly with national NGOs or to accompany convoys to the field.

National non-governmental organization partners

- A total of new 5 national non-governmental organizations received approval during the reporting period and additional branches were approved in Aleppo and Al Hasakeh governorates. There are now 14 national non-governmental organizations allowed to work in Aleppo, 14 in Al Hasakeh, 8 in Deir ez-Zor, 6 in Rif Dimashq and 4 in Dar`a.
- There are 82 national non-governmental organizations authorized to operate through 139 branches countrywide.

On 7 April, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations (FAO) was authorized by the Ministry of Agriculture for the first time to partner with a civil society organization for the distribution of seeds in Ar Raqqah.

5. Funding

- $606.5 million of funding was registered during the reporting period. Of that amount, $178.3 million was for activities inside the Syrian Arab Republic and $428.2 million was to support Syrian refugees in neighbouring countries.
- Of note $300 million in commitments from Kuwait and $60 million from the United Arab Emirates, which were committed during the reporting period.
- As at 21 April, the total funding for the Syrian Arab Republic humanitarian assistance response plan and the refugees response plan stood at 22 per cent ($6.5 million requested, $1.4 million received).

6. Overview of United Nations humanitarian response

Food assistance

- Food was dispatched for 4.1 million people in all 14 governorates in March, an 11 per cent increase from February.
- Since 22 February, WFP has dispatched food for 413,250 people in hard-to-reach areas, with 81 per cent of them in opposition-controlled or contested areas. Of those, 297,750 were reached during the reporting period, between 22 March and 14 April, 62 per cent of whom were in opposition or contested areas.
- The number of WFP final distribution points in opposition-controlled areas increased from 35 to 68 since February. At present, WFP and partners operate over 260 final distribution points countrywide.
- Local community negotiations led to access gains in parts of Rif Dimashq, Ar Raqqah, Deir ez-Zor and Dar`a through regular World Food Programme deliveries, allowing 185,250 people in those areas to be supported with food assistance.
- Through the prepositioning of ready-to-eat rations at the sub-office level, WFP has been able to provide immediate and timely support to over 19,800 people after sudden displacement with 3,965 ready-to-eat rations in Rif Dimashq, Homs, Tartus, Aleppo, Quneitra, Hama, Idlib and Damascus from March to April. Beneficiaries subsequently receive regular family food rations once resettled in new areas.
- Inter-agency convoys conducted during the reporting period enabled WFP to deliver life-saving food assistance in support of 112,500 people in Rif Dimashq, Al Hasakeh, Idlib and Homs.
- To ensure the regular delivery of 850,000 family food rations every month, WFP has to request facilitation letters for each truckload leaving its warehouses in Damascus, Tartus or Ladhiqiyah. In March, over 3,000 requests were approved by Government authorities enabling WFP to dispatch over 820,000 family food rations for a record 4.1 million people in the country.
- Food deliveries have been possible through regular programmes to Dar`a governorate as a whole, in support of 150,985 people in March.

Core relief items/non-food items

- UNHCR regular programme delivery regularly crosses conflict lines. Between 25 March and 1 April, 327 trucks carrying 14,967 cubic metres, or 7,120 metric tons, of core relief items were delivered to the field to benefit 155,540 individuals. Karak and Moarabeh in Dar`a were reached for the first time, through UNHCR implementing partners, with items for 7,500 people. UNHCR provided assistance to 60,482 people in 13 of the 262 hard-to-reach locations. Three areas were reached through inter-agency convoys; the remainder were reached through regular programming. However, 35 of the 262 hard-to-reach locations were not reached, primarily owing to insecurity or withholding of approval. As at 8 April, more than 1.5 million individuals were reached with

core relief items in 2014 in 13 out of 14 governorates of the Syrian Arab Republic.

- IOM provided assistance to 34,314 people — the vast majority in Government-controlled areas (32,260), with the remainder in cross line/opposition areas (542), contested areas (1,170) and in internally displaced persons (IDP) and other locations (342). IOM requested access to 16 of the 262 hard-to-reach areas. The note verbale to request permission to distribute non-food items to 88,000 internally displaced persons and affected populations in 14 locations in Al Hasakeh has not yet been approved. The note verbale of 24 March 2014 to request access to Deir ez-Zor also has not been answered. IOM delivered non-food items to one hard-to-reach location — Karak in Dar`a governorate — to 532 beneficiaries, distributing baby diapers. During the reporting period new requests were made to provide humanitarian assistance to two non-hard-to-reach areas — Al Shamas and Masaken al-Edikhar in Homs. Both are still pending approvals.

- FAO delivered agricultural input to more than 10,700 beneficiaries in Homs, western Aleppo and Rif Dimashq, including in some hard-to-reach areas as part of its regular programme.

Health

- The first agency-specified delivery to the opposition-controlled town of Abu Kamal in Deir ez-Zor governorate was carried out by WHO during the reporting period, reaching more than 113,000 people with medicines and medical supplies.

- Since March, WHO supported 1.5 million people with medicines and medical equipment, including surgical supplies, of whom 445,710 were in hard-to-reach and contested areas, and supported 408,470 Syrians in opposition-controlled areas in Deir ez-Zor, Idlib and Ar Raqqah governorates.

Water, sanitation and hygiene

- UNICEF has supported enhanced access to safe water in Afrin and eastern Aleppo city, in Aleppo governorate; in Ar Rastan and Talbiseh in Homs; and in Taiebat al-Imam, Suran and Tal Hawash in Hama governorate, through the provision of generators and water tanks, benefiting more than 1.7 million people living in those governorates. In particular, through its regular programme, UNICEF supported critical life-saving services, including water, hygiene and sanitation, health and education to 14 hard-to-reach locations: 4 in Homs (Talbiseh, Tir Mallah, Al Waer and Ar Rastan); 3 in Hama (Suran, Taeibat al-Imam and Treismeh), 3 in Aleppo (Afrin, Al Bab and eastern Aleppo city), 2 in Al Hasakeh (Al Hasakeh city and Qamishli), 1 in Ar Raqqah (Raqqah city) and 1 in Deir ez-Zor (Deir ez-Zor city).

- In addition, around 12,000 schoolchildren benefited from improved water, sanitation and hygiene facilities in Al Hasakeh in partnership with Action Centre la Faim. Partnering with a local NGO, UNICEF is also supporting 1,250 internally displaced persons in two shelters in Ar Raqqah.

- During the reporting period, UNICEF delivered 460,000 litres of sodium chloride to water authorities for the purification of public water supplies in

11 governorates, enhancing access to safe water to 1.7 million people living in those governorates. Deliveries were made to Tartus, Ladhiqiyah, Rif Dimashq, Aleppo, Hama, Dar`a, Qunaitra, Ar Raqqah, Deir ez-Zor, Suwayda and Idlib governorates.

- UNICEF and partners reached 54,770 schoolchildren with improved access to education in nine hard-to-reach areas.

Education

- Through regular programming, UNICEF reached nine hard-to-reach locations and provided education to 54,770 children.
- As a result of advocacy efforts of the Executive Director of UNICEF during his visit to Homs on 12 and 13 March, the Governor and relevant security authorities provided authorization to UNICEF to deliver and install 13 prefabricated classrooms in Al Waer, a hard-to-reach area with large numbers of displaced children and a shortage of classroom space, as most schools are being used as shelters. Each prefabricated classroom will provide space for 40 students. They are in the process of being installed.
- In addition, UNICEF continues to work through local partners in Al Waer, providing an integrated emergency response covering education, psychosocial support, water, sanitation and hygiene, health and nutrition services, benefiting more than 11,000 internally displaced persons and host communities.
- UNICEF, in partnership with the Syrian Arab Red Crescent and other local NGOs, continues to support remedial classes and education supplies to over 30,000 children in Ar Rastan, Talbiseh, and Al Waer in Homs governorate (all under control by armed opposition groups). In Al Hasakeh and Qamishli, school supplies distribution started during the reporting period, targeting 25,000 children. So far, 5,016 students in 58 schools in Qamishli have received school bags.

Palestine refugees

Through regular programming during the reporting period, UNRWA provided the following assistance/services:

- Cash assistance to 126,169 individuals, with a total value of $8,074,816.
- Food assistance for 148,184 individuals.
- Medical health-care consultations for 75,156 individuals.
- Primary education services to 33,511 children.
- Vocational education services to 1,123 people.
- Of the 262 besieged and hard-to-reach areas, 10 are formal or informal Palestinian refugee camps or locations where Palestinian refugees reside; 3 were reached (1 by inter-agency convoy, 2 through a regular programming; in total, 41,892 people were reached with food in hard-to-reach areas); 3 are depopulated; 3 were not accessible owing to insecurity; and 1 request is pending.

- UNRWA continues to provide shelter to a!most 14,000 civilians in a combination of UNRWA and UNRWA-managed facilities across the Syrian Arab Republic.
- In addition to humanitarian assistance, UNRWA continues to provide health, education and social services to approximately 500,000 Palestine refugees across the Syrian Arab Republic, with offices and operations in Damascus, Aleppo, Dar`a , Homs, Hama, Ladhiqiyah, Suwayda and Tartus governorates.